

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 00882 240806Z

17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 RSC-01

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 AGR-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 PA-01

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R 240749Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2776

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON EAGR ET

SUBJECT: SOVIET EMBASSY VIEWS ON ETHIOPIAN LAND REFORM

1. DURING JANUARY 22 CONVERSATION WITH ECON COUNSELOR, RUSSIAN COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR, SERGUEI P. LJUBIMOV, INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE CURRENT ETHIOPIAN REGIME WOULD UNDERTAKE A DRASTIC LAND REFORM PROGRAM, I.E., NATIONALIZE ALL LAND INCLUDING SMALL HOLDINGS. HE STATED THAT ETHIOPIA COULD NOT AFFORD TO LOSE ANY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AN INEVITABLE RESULT OF TOTAL NATIONALIZATION OF LAND. HE BELIEVES IT WILL BE MANY YEARS BEFORE ETHIOPIA IS READY FOR SUCH AN APPROACH TO THE AGRARIAN SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY.

COMMENT. LJUBIMOV'S OPINION APPEARED TO BE BASED ON HIS ASSESSMENT OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A RATIONAL APPROACH TO THE LAND REFORM ISSUE RATHER THAN ON ANY INSIDE INFORMATION. HIS COMMENTS CERTAINLY SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY HERE BEARS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RATHER INCOMPREHENSIBLE INTEREST WHICH MANY DIRG MEMBERS HAVE LONG SHOWN IN A DRASTIC "TOTAL NATIONALIZATION" FORMULA FOR LAND REFORM WHICH ALMOST ALL FOREIGN OBSERVERS BELIEVE WOULD SET OFF CIVIL WAR IN THIS COUNTRY.

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 00882 240806Z

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Message Attributes

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